A PARADOX Againſt LIBERTY.

VVritten by the Lords, During their Impriſonment In the TOWER.

A POEM.

Contrahes Vento nimium ſecundo
Turgida Vela.

LONDN,
Printed in the Year. 1679.

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Contrahor Fœta Natura Secunda
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A Priſon, or the Iſle, are much the ſame;
They onely differ in Conceit and Name.
As Art the firſt, Nature Immures the laſt;
Onely i'th' larger Mold her Figure's caſt.
All Iſlanders are in Priſon pent,
And none at large, not thoſe o'th' Continent.
Each Mariner's a Priſoner in his Bark.
The living World was priſon'd in the Ark.
And though it be abroad adayes, the Light
Still lodges in the priſon of black Night.
The Sea it ſelf, is to its bounds confin'd,
And *Æolus* in Caves ſhuts up the wind.
Nothing in Nature has ſuch vaſt Extent,
But is impriſon'd in its Element.
The Fiſh, in watry Dungeons are inclos'd;
Men, Beaſts, and Birds, to Earth and Air diſpos'd.
If to enlarge their narrow bounds, they ſtrive,
The fatal freedom rarely they ſurvive.
And as with them, we hope with us 'twill be,
When from their Priſons took, Death ſets them free.
Man can no more a native freedom boaſt;
That Jewel ne're was found, ſince firſt 'twas loſt.
'Twas then tranſported to the *Stygian* Coaſt.
But ſtill there's ſomething which we do eſteem,
Onely becauſe 'tis like the poliſht Gemme,
And this we Freedom call; its credit grows
From a falſe ſtamp, the guilded outſide ſhows:
Which avaritious Man attempts to get,
Cheated and ruin'd with the Counterfeit.
Like Children, Soapy-bubbles they purſue,
And the fantaſtick Viſion, take for true;
But whilſt they think bright forms they do embrace,
Ixion-like, they find a cloud i'th' place.
Conſent of Crowds, exceeding credit brings,
And ſeems to ſtamp Truth's Image on falſe things.
Not what's a real good, but what does ſeem,
Still ſhares the blind and popular eſteem.
Whilſt Senſe and Fancy over-rule their choice,
And Reaſon in th'Election has no voice.
But Souls in vain have Reaſon's Attributе,
If to their Rule, they cannot Senſe ſubmit.
Hence the Heroick mind makes no complaint,
But freedom does enjoy, even in reſtraint.
When Chains and Fetters do his Body bind,
He then appears more free, and leſs confin'd.
Diſcord and Care, which do diſtract him here,
In durance take their leave, and come not there.
Falſe Friends and Flatt'rers, then, take laſt adieu,
Who often ſwore how faithful and how true,
Things their diſhoneſt boſoms never knew.

Theſe, like the Swallows, in cold weather flye;
A Summers fortune only draws them nigh.
Flatt'rers a ſort of fatal Suckers be,
Which draw the Sap 'till they deſtroy the Tree.
Fair Vertue to their Opticks when they bring,
Seems a deform'd and antiquated thing,
Vice they commend, whilſt Vertue is deſpis'd;
The blackeſt by theſe Negroes moſt are pris'd.
Theſe ſlaves to Vice, do hug ſo hard and long;
Till like the o'refond Ape, they kill their Young.
Ambition in the Mind's a Feveriſh Thirſt,
Which is by drinking, dryer than at firſt;
And theſe will feed the humour till it burſt.
When Paraſites the Arbiters are made,
They'l place the Garland on a Bedlam's head.
Riot, Exceſs, and Pleaſure car' the Day,
And Luſt (the worſt of Tyrants) bears the ſway,
At whoſe black Throne they blind Allegiance pay,
Moroſe and dull they do account the Grave;
And the Meek-man, fit onely for a Slave:
The Humble, of a Nature poor and baſe;
The Chaſt, ſprung from a dull inſipid Race;
And Temperance, a Gallant's chief diſgrace.
In Vertues garb, the great Mans Vice they dreſs,
Giving it Names which ſound of Worthineſs.
They call his Pride the Grandeur of his Mind,
And for his Luſt the Name they have deſign'd
Is a complaiſant Ayr, that make men kind.
Profaneſs is his Wit; and his Exceſs
By a Gay janty Humour they expreſs;
All his Debauches too muſt be no leſs.
Thus they lap Ruine up, and guild our Crimes;
But Vice deſtroys like *Ivy*, where it climbs.
In us, the dang'rous State th'Ambitious ſee
Of Greatneſs, Avarice, and Flatterie.
Gifts, Honours, Office, Greatneſs, Grace of Kings;
Raiſe the Ambitious upon Treach'rous wings;
'Till from the mighty heights they giddy grow,
And fall into the Ruine lyes below.
If the firſt fail, which do ſupport our ſtate;
The laſt our Fall ſerve to precipitate.
This with too dear Experience we have bought;
And learnt a Leſſon, which too late was taught.
Proſperity's a Drug, that muſt be ta'ne
Corrected (*Opium*-like) or elſe 'tis bane.
A more *Lethargick* quality's in her,
Than ever yet in *Opium* did appear.
Her fatal Poyſon to the Mind ſhe ſends,
And uncorrect, in ſure deſtruction ends.

Whilſt in the way her guilded ſnares ſhe lays,
Eaſie and credulous Man ſhe ſoon betrays;
Who ſees her Roſes and her Lillies here,
But her concealed Snakes doth never fear.
Proſperity's repaſts puff up the Mind
With unſubſtantial and unwholſome wind.
'Tis a *Hault-Gouſt* which *Epicures* do uſe,
And choicer Viands ſqueamiſhly refuſe.
But when Affliction moulds your daily bread,
'Tis then the ſtaff of Life with which ſhe's fed.
Affliction (like the River *Nile*) beſtows
Her fruitful bleſſings whereſo'ere ſhe flows:
And if when ſhe withdraws, ſtrange Serpents riſe,
Not in her ſtreams, but in the Soyl, it lyes.
Which (like the great *Apollo*) ſhe ſtrikes dead,
By the ſame Influence they firſt were bred,
If ſhe return, and ſhew her hidden head.
Great Minds (like the victorious Palms) are wont
Under the Weights of Fortune more to mount.
Strongly ſuppreſt, and hurl'd upon the ground,
Fill'd with ſublimer thoughts they more rebound.
Still careleſs whether Fortune ſmile or frown,
Whether ſhe give, or take away a Crown.
Our Walls are Tyded, and by that we know
She alwaies ebbs, when ſhe doth leave to flow,
And conſtant in Inconſtancy does grow.
Make an attacque all Injuries that can,
They fall like Waves beneath a riſing Swan.
Freed and ſecur'd from all diſcordant Care,
Here we our heads above the billows bear,
Till from our ſhoulders they tranſplanted are.
And from their ſummits, with dumb gapes proclaim,
Of a Quincumvirat the trait'rous ſhame.
But during all this Storm, we ſtill do find
An Anchor and a Haven in our Mind,
Not beaten now, though then expos'd to th' Wind.
As Nightingals, our boſoms we expoſe,
And ſing, environ'd with the ſharpeſt woes.
Degraded from vain Honour, here we grow
More great and high, as Trees by lopping do.
Honour's like froth in each Man's glaſs of Beer;
'Tis leaſt of uſe, though topmoſt it appear.
The common Vouchee for ill acts ſhe's grown;
It and Religion all our Miſchiefs own.
She raigns in Youth with an unruly heat
And in her falſer Mirror ſhews them Great,
Till Age and Time convince them of the Cheat.
Raſh heads approve what ſober Men deſpiſe,
And the fantaſtick Garb offends the Wiſe;
She rarely now is ſeen, but in Diſguiſe.
True Honour and plain Honeſty's the ſame;
From various Dwellings, comes the various Name:
For whilſt ſhe's gay in Courts, ſhe's Honour there,
But Honeſty with us in Durance here.
In differing States, moſt things have difference:
What pleas'd this day, the next offends the Prince.
The Proſperous loath what the Afflicted love;
Priſoners abhor, what free, they did approve.
And ſtill there's power in each Man's choice, to make
Himſelf content, if he can wiſely take,
And think his own (though hard) a happy Stake
In ev'ry ſtate does ſome Contentment dwell,
And here we find a Palace in a Cell.

Good is good ev'ry where, and ev'ry thing,
And Good can of it ſelf no Evil bring.
All Good's a raye of the firſt Light alone;
When Ill approaches, only that's our own.
Vertue's not gain'd by ſpending of our days
In pleaſure, Princes Courts, or from their Rays.
At Vertue's Coaſt by Travel we arrive,
And ſo by Travel Vertue's kept alive.
She dwindles if ſhe want due Exerciſe;
But us'd, grows brighter, and ſtill multiplies.
Vertue increaſes Snow-ball-like, rowl'd on:
A lazy Vertue's next of kin to None.
Priſ'ners indeed they be, that do lay by
At once their Freedom and their Induſtry.
If Men turn Drones within theſe hony'd Hyves,
It lyes i'th' Priſ'ner's heart, and not his Gyves.
The Good grow better here, the Bad grow worſe;
The Spur that makes this go, does jade that Horſe.
Hence the great'ſt part are male-content and ſad,
Since that the Good are fewer than the Bad.
A Bliſs that ſprings from penitential joy,
Is the Minds balſome in each ſharp Annoy;
Fools only their own Comforts do deſtroy
To this Retirement we can freely go;
'Tis the great'ſt pace of Majeſty below:
Our ſtirring out imports the World to know.
The Goalers Centinel to guard our Doors,
And Caſtles are contain'd i'th' narrow Floors.
More happy and more ſafe, ſecur'd from Foes,
Than thoſe whom Troops of Enemies encloſe.
Much more as Priſ'ners, our high bliſs we boaſt,
Being ſecur'd from ſuch a mighty Hoaſt
Of deadly Foes, ſo fierce with wrath and might,
Our ſelves ſo feeble, and unfit to fight
'Gainſt the black band of Vicious and Profane,
Who Thouſands do undo in each Campain.
In the Aſſault, we ſeldom brook the Field,
But flye like Hares, or elſe like Cowards yield.
Yet this the World eſteems an hard eſtate,
And Us, who feel it, count unfortunate.
Shew then, Philoſophy! the ſtate wherein
Such Safety, and ſo much Content is ſeen.
Wherein leſs rugged or ſteep hind'rance lyes,
T' obſtruct the Path unto Perfection's prize.
The uſeful Rod's only bound up for this,
To whip and laſh the Childiſh on to Bliſs;
Who ſullenly refuſe the Rod to kiſs,
And ſo the Bleſſing in the Whipping miſs.
Some, like the Whale, only deſign'd to play
In fruitleſs pleaſures, drive the flying day;
As Boys with Clackers drive the Lent away.
Whilſt here, we ſtop the hours of Time, that flyes,
With Contemplation's nobler Exerciſe.
Maugre all Goals, think we e're long muſt dye,
And then enjoy an endleſs Liberty;
Death will redeem from long Captivity.
Man's Life's a Piece ſpun of a varions Thred;
In ſome 'tis fine, in ome a courſer Web.
The Threds acroſs, th' Occurrences of Fate,
Cut early from the Loom by Death, or late.
The Dread of Kings, Death, does not us diſmay;
To Dye's leſs, than be Tantaliz'd each day.
What Man complains, with Wearineſs oppreſt,
That Night is come, the only Time to Reſt?

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